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Papers on regional library activities which were presented at the 1985 International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) conference include: (1) "Importance of Information Resources in National Development with Particular Reference to the Asian Scene" (Yogendra P. Dubey, India); (2) "Report of the Activities of the Regional Section for Asia 1984/1985" (J. Soosai, Malaysia); and (3) "The Role and the Importance of a Small Nation's Library Association within the Multinational State" (Martina Sircelj, Yugoslavia). (THC)

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IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE ASIAN SCENE

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IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE ASIAN SCENE

BY

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ABSTRACT

Defines information and examines its role in the decision-making. Planning which involves decision-making is a prerequisite to the national development. In view of the importance of information in national development a number of developing Asian countries have established information systems and services which suffer from some complex problems. Some measures have been identified to overcome these problems.

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I. Introduction

"Information society" is a concept widely discussed in the contemporary literature including that of library and information science. It refers to the "Post-industrial society- that is a society which no longer places emphasis on industrial production but on the accumulation and distribution of theoretical knowledge as a directive force of innovation and change- information society"[1]. The societies in the industrially advanced countries are in the midst of transition from "industrial society" to the "post-industrial society". The economy of these industrially advanced societies is referred to as "information economy". In information economy emphasis is on processing of information to increase productivity rather than processing of physical resources that are becoming scarce and expensive day by day.

The concept of information society and developments in computer and telecommunication technologies which have brought the potential value of information to the level of consciousness, have global implication. It has been observed that with the help of powerful yet inexpensive computer and telecommunication technologies developing countries are likely to move straight from "agricultural economy" into the "information economy"[2].

Realizing the potential value of information as the chief raw material and principal product of modern economy, the developing countries demanded at the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology (UNCSTD) held in Vianna in 1979, for a new International Information Order (IINO) a demand that is parallel to the developing countries' struggle to establish a new International Economic Order (NIEO). The demand for (IINO) among others included a new Global Information Network (GIN) that would facilitate the transfer of scientific and technological information to the Third World, required in the efforts to improve their economic productivity[3].

Information as a factor to the economic progress is increasingly gaining importance in most of the developing Asian countries. Access to information is now a major concern of governments, industry, and non-profit sector in these countries. Until recent years, the application of scientific and technological innovations and other measures were given greater emphasis to improve productivity. Now attention is being paid to the potentially powerful information resource to the national development.

II.Definition

In order to gain an understanding of how information resource is important in the national development, the concepts underlying the term "information" must be analyzed.

The term "information" has a variety of meaning depending upon the context in which it is used. In the context of national development defining the term "information" would require us to examine first what constitute national development.

Many scholars and social scientists have viewed development in terms of economic take-off. Rostow[4] considers the pre-requisites of an economic take-off as (1) the building of a new generation of men and women trained and motivated

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appropriately to operate a modern society, (2) a productivity revolution in agriculture, (3) a massive build of transportation and sources of energy, (4) development of capacity to earn more foreign exchange. Economist Robert Heilbroner[5] strongly feels that the economic development is not primarily economic but a political and social process. Normal Jacobs[6] while attempting at a broader perspective of development argues that "development is used to denote the maximization of the potential of the society regardless of any limits currently set by the goals or fundamental structure of the society". In his view development is an open ended commitment to productive change. While the role of an economic facet is recognized by all, it is also accepted that social, cultural, educational, physical conditions all so intricately interwoven in the political system, would move forward alongwith the economic development.

Planning is a pre-requisite to the development and is a continuous movement toward desired goals. These goals may in context with the most developing Asian countries be described as: (1) eradication of poverty, unemployment and improvement in quality of life and (2) modernization and building of a self reliant economy. Planning is concerned with how to allocate resources and control activities so as to maximise benefits imparted to the society. The major emphasis is toward outputs, or accomplishments as related to inputs or resources necessary to achieve these objectives. Estimates are made of both outputs and costs of various alternatives. The planners use these estimates together with their experience and intuition to make decisions[7]. Ackoff[8] has emphasized the relationship between planning and decision making. Planning decisions possess the feature of (1) being performed in advance of the planned action, (2) involving a system of decisions and (3) causing things to be done e.g. motivating. A planner normally produces nothing of a physical nature. Rather he processes decisions relating the efforts of others. To this as Peter Drucker[9] has succinctly stated, he has a specific tool: "information".

1. **Information:** As stated, there are far too many definitions and meanings of information. But only a few clear statements that appear to be more relevant to the present context is presented here.

According to George Miller[10] "information is something we need when we face a choice. Whatever its content the amount of information required depends on the complexity of the choice. If we face a wide range of equally likely alternatives, if any thing can happen, we need more information than if we face a simple choice between alternatives. Cherry[11] argues that "information aids the decision-maker by narrowing the range of hypotheses. Information thus reduces decision-makers uncertainity by narrowing his range of viable alternatives. Yovits et al[12] state that (1) information is data of value in decision-making, (2) information gives rise to observable effects.

The basic premise of these definitions is that information is a commodity or tool with which human beings make decisions. According to Forrester[13] a decision involves three things: First, is the creation of a desired state of affairs. What we would like the system to be ? What are we striving for ? What are the goals and objectives for decision points ? Second, there is the apparent state of actual condition. The third, involves the generation of kinds of action that will eliminate the discrepancy between the desired state and actual condition. In general, the kind of action involves conversion of that information into action which leads to achievements of goal, more precisely, which eliminates the discrepancy between the desired state and actual condition. The process of conversion of information into the proposed action is decision making. Success of decisions depend primarily on what information is chosen and how conversion is executed.

Decision making is problem solving where selection of a best course of action among several alternatives (condition of uncertainity) is involved. As human beings grow their needs grow. In consequence to this they are faced with the question of chosing a best course of action that may lead to the fulfilment of their needs.

They do so on the basis of all relevant information available to them and on the present state of their knowledge. They select useful information on probability of providing a best course of action and convert it into action. This conversion of information into action is problem solving. Thus the outcome of the action is the fulfilment of the needs-that is the desired goals of happiness and well-being.

Information is not a physical commodity, but an abstract thing- a fact, an idea or data. It is often interchangeably used with data and knowledge. Some writers prefer to use the term "data" as the raw material from which informative statements can be structured. In ordinary usage data are distinguished from information by their discreteness and lack of structure, information could then be considered as having a greater complexity in structure. It also has the potential of being assimilated in a human being whereby it becomes knowledge[14].

2. Resource: In order to preserve information for its use by human being it must be recorded in some form and media through which it can be communicated. It is recorded in the form: written, typed, printed, painted, recorded, photographed, data processed (in machine readable form) etc., and presented in several media-books, journals, maps, statistical tables, charts, films, slides, videotapes, videodiscs and cassettes, magnetic tapes, discs etc. It is the recorded information in various forms and media that constitute the resource.

III. Importance of information in national development

Information is the basis of economic development and social well being. When properly used it results in the improved functioning of industry, agriculture, trade and services. It serves as resource for innovative activities in science and technology. It is the raw material from which options and alternatives emerge. The demand for information is determined by the motivation or desire for progress. This demand can be considered for individuals, organizations or society in aggregate. Progress occurs when the supply of information is increased in scope, validity, and the oppor-

tunities for application. Its desired goal is to produce consistently better yield at a lower cost.

In the absence of information as Wells[15] writes, we may witness considerable waste of money, time and efforts. This can not be afforded at all by any country, and more particularly by the developing Asian countries which have insufficient resources and so many priorities. Promotion of information service therefore must receive highest priority in these countries to support their massive programmes of modernization and national development. It is useful, at this point, to make certain assumptions underlying the importance of information resources in planning for national development with particular reference to the developing Asian countries:

1. That information is vital to the planning for national development.
2. That the success of the planning for national development depends largely on planner's ability to access and assimilate appropriate information for decision making/problem solving.
3. That the demand for information is the demand derived from the problems and their solution. Thus information appropriate to solution of problem is essential for progress.
4. That information pervades all aspects of human activity. Social progress can be sought by providing information to all sectors of the society.
5. That the developing Asian countries may have more to gain in their effort towards national development from improvement in information processing than merely from improvements in the production of physical resources.
6. That the new developments in information technology may make possible transfer of appropriate information in the form and medium suitable to each sector of the society.
7. That the "information age" may usher in most of the developing Asian countries in a unique way, where old and new value systems coexist.

Importance of information in relation to the national development has been accepted in many developing Asian countries. During the last two decades, most of the countries have formulated national information policy as a part of their national development plans, and have taken steps to establish information infrastructure to promote the use of information to the progress of science and technology necessary for social and economic development. The information infrastructure included libraries, documentation centres, information systems and services. To ensure improvement in storage, processing, and dissemination of information, a number of Asian countries have initiated plans to employ computer and telecommunication technologies. Some countries have even taken steps to develop various types of networks.

IV. Problems impeding progress

However, from the observation of the real world situation in these countries one may find that the current state of information systems and services presents a stark disappointment. Although, the performance level of information systems may differ from country to country or institution to institution within a country, yet there is an obvious overall stagnation in the improvement of the development of the information systems and services. There are a number of problems that hinder the progress in this sector. Seracevic[16], Neelameghan[17], Lancaster[18] and Griffiths[19] have identified some of the problems likely to hinder planning and development of information systems and services in the developing countries. When it comes to the developing Asian countries, the scale and complexity of problems are much more serious than many other developing countries, especially when most of the developing Asian countries have considerably greater information requirement for the resolution of problems of poverty, over-population, and social inertia that poses a tremendous hurdle to economic development. Some of the major problems that hinder the progress of information systems and services are identified as follows:

1. Lack of awareness: Many decision makers, researchers, and other potential users are not aware of importance of information in country's progress or even their own well-being. As a result, there is underutilization of already existing information facilities that in turn makes information systems and services a matter of least priority. The reasons for lack of awareness are many. Information illiteracy, faulty system of education, indirect benefits and passive attitude are some reasons to mention:

a) Information illiterates are those who are not aware of the value of information, and are not exposed to various information resources. Even if those who are aware of the resources, they are unable to use them for they do not know how to locate, retrieve, select and assimilate information from them.

b) Faulty education system prevailing in many Asian countries is responsible for the lack of awareness toward the importance of information resources. The education systems do not impart the value of information resources to the educands who are usually not taught how to reach them and use in their study and course preparation. Thus a majority of educated people remain unaware of potential value of information resources.

c) Lack of awareness can also be attributed to the indirect benefits accruing from information. The result of investment on information systems and services is largely intangible and indirect. In consequence people in administration are less concerned about them, and in turn information service receive lower priority by the administration.

d) The passive attitude of librarians and information professionals who are supposed to play a crucial role as information facilitator is a significant factor in the underutilization of the existing information facilities. They must provide appropriate information to the potential user in a form in which it can be assimilated and used. However, lack of any initiative to provide information according to the individuals needs and repackaging it into usable formats lead to minimal use of information by the users. The inevitable implication

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is that users are less enthusiastic to approach to libraries and information centres.

2. Collection building: Adequate attention is not paid to the systematic collection building. Most of the Asian countries depend heavily (say 70-80%) on the resources published in advanced countries to cater the information needs for research and education. Resources published in advanced countries are becoming expensive day by day. Cost of journals and other serial publications are rising at an alarming rate. Problem is exacerbated because price must be paid in the currency of the producer country. The fluctuations in the exchange rate of currency and import restrictions adversely affect the acquisition programme. Problem is further aggravated because libraries must buy from the ever expanding and proliferating resources from their shrinking budget to cater the information needs of a growing population. In the absence of any rational policy, collection building is haphazard and inappropriate to the users needs which in turn create negative impact on them.

3. Document delivery system: Absence of an adequate mechanism to support the information service in many of the Asian countries is a big obstacle. Success of an information service requires not only access to information, but that the documents have been acquired and can be supplied to the user. It requires efficient document delivery system in the form of interlibrary lending, and document supply system with the facility of photocopy and microfilming. In most of these countries communication means are inefficient and expensive seriously hindering the flow of documents.

4. Language: As most of the Asian countries acquire resources from the developed countries, resources are either in English or any other European language. As a result these resources are unintelligible to the vast majority of people. A number of Asian countries have more than one language. This creates an obstacle to the

transfer of information within a country to the people who know only their own dialect. Language therefore, places a barrier in transfering information contained in the resources acquired by the libraries and information centres.

5. Lack of Continuity: When persons in government and administration change, in many cases, implementation of projects for establishing information systems and services is either discontinued or relegated to the low priority area.

6. High cost of database use: There are over 2800 bibliographic and numeric databases now available on-line[20]. Of these over 1000 databases are available internationally. High costs involved in searching the databases and in using the telecommunication facilities to access them, make it prohibitive to use these databases by many developing Asian countries.

7. Restriction in information transfer: Even when arrangement are made for transfer of technology from the developed to developing countries, sometimes transfer of information on technology know-how is restricted, causing problems in keeping the technology working.

8. Expensive high technology: New data processing and telecommuniction technologies used for information handling involve high cost. Some ofthe poor Asian countries may find themselves unable, without aid, to acquire such expensive technology.

9. Dearth of qualified manpower: In many developing Asian countries there is a serious shortage of qualified manpower to handle computers and telecommunication technologies for information processing. As a result, it is not possible in these countries to cope with the increasing mass of information.

10. Resistance to technology: Librarians and users of libraries alike resist technology. As a result, employment of technology to improve operations and services in libraries and information centres is hampered.

V. Promoting the use of information and improving the information systems in the developing Asian countries

In order to promote the use of information and improve information systems and services a number of different types of actions are needed:

1. Libraries, documentation and information centres should function as the key promoters of the use of information, and must play a dynamic role in transfering information.
2. Decision-makers and researchers should be made aware of importance of information by the active support of information specialists in their problem solving activity, and by user education.
3. Resources must be developed responsive to the information needs of different types of users.
4. Efficient back-up service-interlibrary lending and document supply systems with photocopyhing and microfilming facilities must be provided.
5. After defining and recognizing information needs of users, coherent information infrastructure should be developed.
6. Planning for automation should be done after analysing information needs of the country, or organisations within a country.
7. Adequate training facilities to develop manpower capable of handling information processing and dissemination should be provided.
8. Each Asian country should develop its own database of local and national resources.
9. Multilingual thesauri and translation service must be provided to resolve language problem.
10. Appropriate technology centres in each Asian country should be created pooling information on technologies being adopted within a country.
11. Funding for information facilities should be provided on a regular basis similar to that of industry, transportation, health etc.
12. Libraries, documentation and information centres should develop cooperation finally leading to "resource sharing networks" at the local, national, and regional levels.
13. To overcome the resistence toward technology, librarians and users must be educated, in the benefits and the uses of technology.

VI. Conclusion

The above suggestions are some of the significant ones which could be used to eliminate the problems that hinder the promotion of information infrastructure of the developing Asian countries. However, the desired goals of the national development can not be achieved unless the rural people who form the larger segment of the society of many Asian countries are covered with information systems and services oriented to their specific needs. The present information systems are centered around the needs of the urban sector. The rural people can hardly benefit from

them as majority of whom are illiterate. They depend largely on agriculture and related small scale industries. They remain poor owing to the low productivity rate in agriculture. Their agricultural practices are controlled by custom and tradition. Therefore, their need for information is more pressing and urgent so that they may achieve a certain level of efficiency in agriculture. Ironically, information useful to them is packaged in a form and communicated through a channel they simply can not use. Fortunately, the rapid progress in electronic technology had made possible repackaging information in a format that can be used by the rural people. The minicommunication media of cable television,slides, and audio and video cassettes are available to handle information transfer at the local level. Such facilities can be made available at the community centres.

In India an experiment was conducted a few years ago providing information to the villagers through a communication setellite.[21] The remarkable success of the project has given a hope that rural people could also be brought into the main stream of activities toward the national development. If the potential of information technology especially micro-technology is harnessed properly in the betterment of rural people, the present rather static "agrerian society" of the developing Asian countries may eventually move forward to the "information society".

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REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL SECTION FOR ASIA

1984/1985

by J. SOOSAI, Chairman of the SEction
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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REGIONAL
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REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL SECTION FOR ASIA 1984 - 1985

The reorganisation of the Regional Secretariat as Regional Bureau reported in my last annual report suffered a setback when the Secretary of the Regional Section, Mr Edward Lim Huck Tee, Librarian, University of Science in Penang, Malaysia resigned in early January 1985. He is overseas on study leave and is not expected back for some time.

In the meantime, the Advisory Committee of the Regional Section for the year continued to be as follows:

Mr J.S. Soosai (Malaysia) - Chairman

Mr Edward Lim, H.T. (Malaysia) - Secretary (Resigned Jan. 1985)

Ms Madoko Kon (Japan)

Mr D.R. Kalia (India)

Ms Vidyut Khandwala (India)

Dr Park Ke Hong (South Korea)

I need to add, that with the resignation of the Secretary of the Section the total work load of the Section was managed by the Chairman alone, as has been the case for the past so many years. Due to lack of funds there was no opportunity whatsoever for any meeting of the Regional Advisory Committee or personal interaction between the Chairman and any member of the Advisory Committee.

In the meantime, a very important review of the whole regional program of IFLA was initiated by the IFLA Executive Board at its Spring 1984 meeting. The Chairman of the three Regional Sections were invited for a two-day meeting at the Hague on the 12th and 13th September 1984. The meeting was made possible by virtue of the fact that the Chairman of the IFLA Regional Sections for Asia as well as Chairman for the Regional Section for Latin America were invited by the Swedish Library Association for a Seminar on North/South Library Co-operation which was held from 16th - 18th September 1984 at KUNGALV (near Gottenburg). The Chairman of the Regional Section for Africa was however invited for the Hague meeting with a grant from the French Government, but he was unable to attend.

The hectic two-day meeting in the Hague was indeed a brainstorming session with the Chairman of the Professional Board and the IFLA Co-ordinator of professional activities present. The meeting set out to review the medium term program of the Regional Sections as well as to critically examine the present structure of the IFLA Regional Program and suggest ways and means of making it more effective.

In reviewing the Medium Term Program, the meeting took into consideration the perennial problems of the Regional Advisory Committees being unable to meet and discuss implementation of the programs. The lack of funds and the lack of opportunities to meet and discuss has been a detrimental factor affecting the Regional Programs.

In attempting to respond to the basic needs of the region and in consultation with the appropriate IFLA professional groups, the following were incorporated into the Medium Term Program for 1986 - 1991.

1) Organise a regional workshop on UAP.

2) Initiate the publication of an Annual Review of Asian Librarianship.

3) To keep libraries and librarians informed of developments in information technology appropriate for the region.

4) Consider the standards of library education in view of problems relatd to reciprocal recognition of qualifications.

5) Establish a central registry of academic exercises and theses in library and information science produced in the region's schools of library and information science and including other related research work.

6) Organise regional workshops for continuing education in specialised topics in library and information science.

7) Initiate the production of a multimedia package to assist in training school librarians.

8) Initiate and undertake a study of the effectiveness of mobile libraries in reaching rural populations of Asia.

9) To extend the coverage of individuals and countries in the Experienced Library and Information Personnel in Asia (ELIPA) data base and promote its usage.

10) To continue the study of special problems of University Libraries in Asia and encourage greater sharing of resources.

11) To assist in the establishment of special libraries as important centres of information, and the development of a program of continuing education for the staff of such libraries, especially in promotion of the use of new technologies in their services.

The Regional Manager will undertake all those responsibilities which are requested by the IFLA steering bodies. The Regional Manager will be appointed by IFLA on the recommendation of the professional Board.

9) The tasks and duties of the regional offices are:

- to act as clearing house for IFLA Conference papers and IFLA publications in the region
- to produce and distribute the regional Newsletter
- to act as an information and publicity centre on IFLA for the region
- to handle all monetary transactions related to the running of the office in the region.

10) The IFLA Executive Board, on the recommendation of the Professional Board, will decide on the choice of the location of the regional offices.

11) The Regional Manager should attend IFLA General Conferences as often as possible if funds are available.

12) IFLA members residing in a region are automatically a member of the Regional Section concerned.

13) Each Regional Section should have a Standing Committee; its members are elected in accordance with the Statutes for Regions.

14) Members of Standing Committees can be only residents of countries belonging to the region in question.

15) Colleagues from

- industrialised countries
- other regions

may serve as corresponding members of the Standing Committee.

16) Sub-regional groups (cf. pt. 2-5) should be represented on regional Standing Committee. Each group should have at least 2 seats on the Standing Committee of the Regional Section concerned.

17) Standing Committees of each Regional Section should be given the opportunity to meet at least once a year in the region if funds are available.

18) According to the procedure (8.3.1) colleagues from developing countries can be nominated as a member of the Standing Committees of other Sections.

This procedure should be encouraged as much as possible, as it will ensure a better interaction between the professionally oriented Sections and the Regional Sections.

19) The Coordinating Board of the Division of Regional Activities should consist of:

With a definite commitment to implement the above 25 essential points within the next two years the IFLA Professional Board has requested that the existing Advisory Committee members of the Regional Sections extend their period in office until 1987. By this time it is hoped that a more representative Regional Committee will be elected and the regional program will be reactivated along the guidelines provided by the "25 essential points".

Program for Chicago Meeting

In keeping with an earlier policy decision of the Co-ordination Board of the DRA, only a business meeting has been scheduled for the Regional Section for Asia in Chicago.

However, two professional meetings of the Division of Regional Activities were originally planned at the Co-ordinating Board meeting of the Division of Regional Activities held in Nairobi last year as follows:

1) An open meeting of the DRA to discuss three papers from the three Regional Sections on the theme "Importance of Information Resources for National Development".

2) A second open meeting of the DRA to have invited speakers from UNESCO, IDC, DSE, etc. to give papers on the theme "The Role of International Funding Agencies Towards the Development of Library and Information Services in the Third World".

Unfortunately, only the first meeting has been scheduled and the speaker for Asia is Dr Yogendra P. Dubey who is from the Department of Library and Information Science from Benaras Hindu University in India. His paper is entitled "Importance of Information Resources in National Development with Particular Reference to the Asian Scene". The meeting on the role of international funding agencies has not been scheduled.

IFLA Core Program on the Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World (ALP)

Though the specific objectives and professional needs of each region are reflected in the programs of the different Regional Sections under the Division of Regional Activities, the salient features of ALP have been incorporated in the IFLA Medium Term Program 1986 - 1991. The chief objective of the Program is to make a concerted effort to improve librarianship in the third world through "centralised stimulation of decentralised action". Among other things, the following are the main areas of action that have been identified:

- Developing further geographical representation in IFLA by attracting more members from the third world.

- Developing a feeling of belonging by stimulating active participation in IFLA's professional groups and professional meetings.

- Providing services designed to support and encourage librarians, library associations, libraries and library schools by applying IFLA systems, guidelines and standards in their specific fields.

nominated to contest the elections at Chicago. It is hoped that he will receive the voting support from both the developed and developing countries to ensure third world representation on the Executive Board.

Chairman's Acknowledgement

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(J.S. Soosai)
Chairman

26th July 1985

THE ROLE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A SMALL NATION'S LIBRARIAN ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE MULTINATIONAL STATE by Martina Sircelj, Yugoslavia

Longitude and latitude place the geographic position of Slovenia in the very heart of Europe and in the north-west part of the Balcan peninsula. Those two facts itself indicate dynamic history, full of changes, which were of vital importance for the world and especially for Europe.

Many important market and military ways, from the times of the Roman Empire, led over our country--they cross our country to reach the northern Mediteranian Sea, and from there open to the world, to the South, to the East, to the West, and of course to the North. There are the Alps, and there is the juncture of three states: of Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia.

In the first millennium A.D. the Slovenes, the people tenacious of life but cheerful, settled down. Today there is no more but two million Slovenes. The first written records in their own language can be traced back to the end of the first millennium. Even though the periods of complete national and political freedom were rare and passing, it was the culture of language and script, which affirmated and preserved national identity. Through all of the history, the nation had no army, nor many kings or aristocracy, but it had a strong will to stay and to persist in that land, in the heart of Europe, in the juncture of Roman, German, and Slavic cultures.

We can state today: the culture of writing preserved national identity and that was at the same time the best opportunity for books to be printed, for development of librarianship and for establishment of libraries.

As well as in the middle Europe, the culture of writing was developed in manastires and in manastir libraries. Later on nobels established the first private libraries on our territory. The 16th century--the century of Protestantism--brought the first Slovene printed book (15 o) and centuries later, in 1774, the Slovene National Library was established. Organization of Slovene libraries based on the rules common to all middle European libraries. Librarians were mostly teachers or professors, who had to pass special courses for professional librarians. So it is interesting, but not surprising, that the librarians - especially those who worked in the central, national library (which had a privilege of depo legal since 1807 and under the French occupation from 1809 to 1813 it received copies from the whole territory of Illyric province) - became famous not only by their professional work, but also as important promoters and creators of the national culture - as we say in Slovene: they engaged for the Slovene national identity. They created special cultural and political atmosphere, which was of vital importance for the existance of the small nation in the center of Europe - in the juncture of political interests, which usually did not correspond to the demands for its national emancipation and political independence. Those people linked by common aims and work have formed the homogeneous power.

After the first world war which started close to our national territory - on the Balcan peninsula (Sarajevo), the new state was formed and within its borders the Slovene nation gained more assurances for its independence. Those promises were not completely realized, for the new, multinational state suffered serious economical and political crisis.

Slovenes entered the new state with developed cultural and educational institutions which all by themselves proved the national identity of a nation: the theatre, the opera-house, schools (on primary and secondary level), the philharmonic society (Beethoven dedicated it a copy of his pastoral symphony), the national library, which had a privilege of depo legal (at that time that right was extended to all Yugoslavia).

Shortly after the first world war and establishment of Slovene university, the national library took over all the functions of the central university library. Three different types of libraries existed in the country in the decades between wars: schools libraries, libraries established by various associations (club libraries) and of course national and university library. Librarians employed in those libraries, particularly in the national and university library slowly became aware of their profession. They dealt with many professional questions which demanded immediate solutions - but how and where?

The suggestion came from the International Librarian Congress, held in Prague in 1926. After rather long negotiations of Yugoslav librarians from the three national centres (from Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Beograd), the Association of Yugoslav Librarians was finally established. And since the law allowed only one professional association - the national bodies existed only as sections of the Yugoslav association.

It is rather paradoxical that in the middle of central Europe, in a small country with highly developed writing culture, with rich library and librarianship tradition, the professionalization of librarianship developed rather late. And which were the most important problems for Slovene librarians to be solved within their new association, or within its national section respectively?

As first, education of librarians - i.e., organization of schools, which would determine their professional status. Demands for professional review were on the second place. The professional publication would allow permanent work on that field and would be at the same time an instrument of information and education. The third: on the basis of exhaustive research and analysis of professional work, which at that time tended to solve problems of unified description (central catalogue, depo legal, publishing of the national bibliography, inter-library loan and loan system in general) and general standards in order to exceed variety and disunity of professional procedures and standards, which were used in our libraries. And finally: need for new building, especially for the Slovene National and University Library.

In spite of the great efforts, the librarians were not allowed to publish their review, to organize courses, nor schools. Some enthusiastic and unselfish librarians find hospitality for their articles in various contemporary reviews, while the processing and the problem of library loan remained more or less the domain of each librarian and depended merely on their professional education.

Yet Slovene librarians, after the years of endeavour for the new library building, succeeded in their demand. They were supported by Slovene intellectuals, members of Parliament, and by demonstrations of Slovene students. That building still hostels the Slovene National and University Library, as well as the seat of Slovene professional librarian organization: Association of Slovene Librarians. The building was completed just before the second world war, and it was projected by a famous Slovene architect Joze Plecnik (many of his projects were realized in Vienna and in Prague, and his vision of architecture is becoming more and more interesting for contemporary architects).

Although are we, Slovene librarians, proud of that building, we are unfortunately unsatisfied with its functionality. The architect's vision of library was influenced by Antique models, while we would much more appreciate solutions correspondent to contemporary demands of librarianship. However, building keeps the whole Slovene written heritage, as well as many of the world's uniques. It is the symbol of nation's culture; of a nation which never had great dukes nor kings, but it has its culture of writing, the language and the books, and those were weapons which preserved its existance in the very heart of Europe, in the juncture of so many different interests.

The building was completed in 1941, at the eve of war. During the second world war our country witnessed unique cultural phenomena, which could not be compared with anything in Europe, nor in the world. The country, two million Slovenia and Yugoslavia (20 million) was occupied by foreign armies - Slovenia was parcelled between fascist Italy and nazi Germany. Shortly after occupation Adolf Hitler visited Slovenia and commanded "Macht mir dieses Land wieder deutsch!" Slovene teachers, priests and intellectuals were deported with their families to the concentration camps and to other parts of Yugoslavia (Serbia). At the same time ordinary people, intellectuals, teachers, poets and writers, artists and musicians started the revolt and went to the forests. They fought with weapon and with culture - hospitals, military training-camps, and even printing workshops were hidden under the ground in the woods, in caves and in well hidden wooden huts.

Printing-works were located in apartments, in cellars, and in attics; in towns and villages of our occupied country. And not only military proclamations, even illustrated school books for the liberated territory, were printed. Librarians of the national library were anxious to prescribe copies of those illegal publications and many of them were kept well hidden in the library. The enemy knew for that illegal acquisition, but in spite of many ransackings, those documents remained safe, and some of them were discovered in their hiding-places by librarians long after the war was over.

Deep in the forests, among Slovene intellectuals, new ideas on books, print, libraries and schools, began to spring up. The idea of general accessibility of books as a special cultural and educational value in connection with the general accessibility of all printed documents was born there, as well as the first visions of public library. By this time only three types of libraries were organized on Slovene territory: school libraries, club libraries and the national library. The idea of public library was therefore born in the times of greatest distress, in the middle of occupied Europe. This valuable vision was slowly realized after the war, for the strength of nation were exhausted.

Many of ideas that Slovene librarians could only dream about in their first association of Yugoslav librarians, gradually became true in the years and decades that followed the war. Above all, their organization was not association of Yugoslav librarians but the union of independent national professional societies, associated on the federal degree.

Finally the first schools for librarians were organized (up to the first degree) and recently new projects prepared the organization on the second degree. Slovene librarians began to publish their professional review in 1948, and professional sections and commissions discussed unified standards of processing and accepted (within the Yugoslav extent) the international standards. The first law on librarianship was issued in 1961 in order to determine special importance and functions of this activity while the main functions of library education still remain, in spite of the schools for librarians, in association's domain.

Professional awareness expanded and cumulated in a project of the general library-information system, which was accepted by Slovene Assembly in 1971 and entirely defined in the law on library-information system in 1982. Suggestions for the law, for the system, and for the operation standards for each kind of libraries were formulated and defined within the sections and commissions of the association. Whenever professional problems reached over national boundaries, they were adjusted in the Union of Yugoslav Librarian Association - that refers to the standards concerning different types of libraries and library material processing. Such adjustments do not influence the activity of libraries and each national association has its own specialities, its own legitimacy of historical development. Yugoslav libraries are not uniformed. There are notable differences among republics in development and in organization of libraries.

National libraries are of special importance for activity of associations, as well as for the Yugoslav library-information system. There are eight of them, and they exchange material processed in accordance with the standards of international bibliographic control, so that each national library keeps the material from its own republic and from all Yugoslavia. Coherency of cooperation among national libraries is provided by the Union of Yugoslav Librarian Associations and by the Association of Yugoslav National Libraries.

The contemporary computer technology does not provide only new and better solutions in library operation, it also brings new dilemmas and problems. We could say that the harmony of the library system, so skillfully woven in the years after the second world war, has split. The reason can be found in new technology which brought success and new professional solutions to certain types of libraries and revolutionized information systems. It might be stated that different profiles of library users caused the need for automation in special libraries.

From one point of view this leads to two different systems: to the system of scientific and technical information on one hand, and to the library-information system on the other. Others suggest that there should be only one system with certain parts supported by computer technology, while other parts do not need automation at all - at least for now. For, as it is, general opinion of these theoretics - information on document and from the document can hardly be divided from the document itself - at least library users cannot see the difference. Such dilemmas result from the fact that some libraries have certain priorities in acquisition of new technology and from their willingness for the common computerized data bases.

Professional efforts of the last few years are aimed at the following goals: library automation and mutual linkage on the basis of new technology. These subjects are now discussed in the professional sections and commissions within the national and Yugoslav framework.